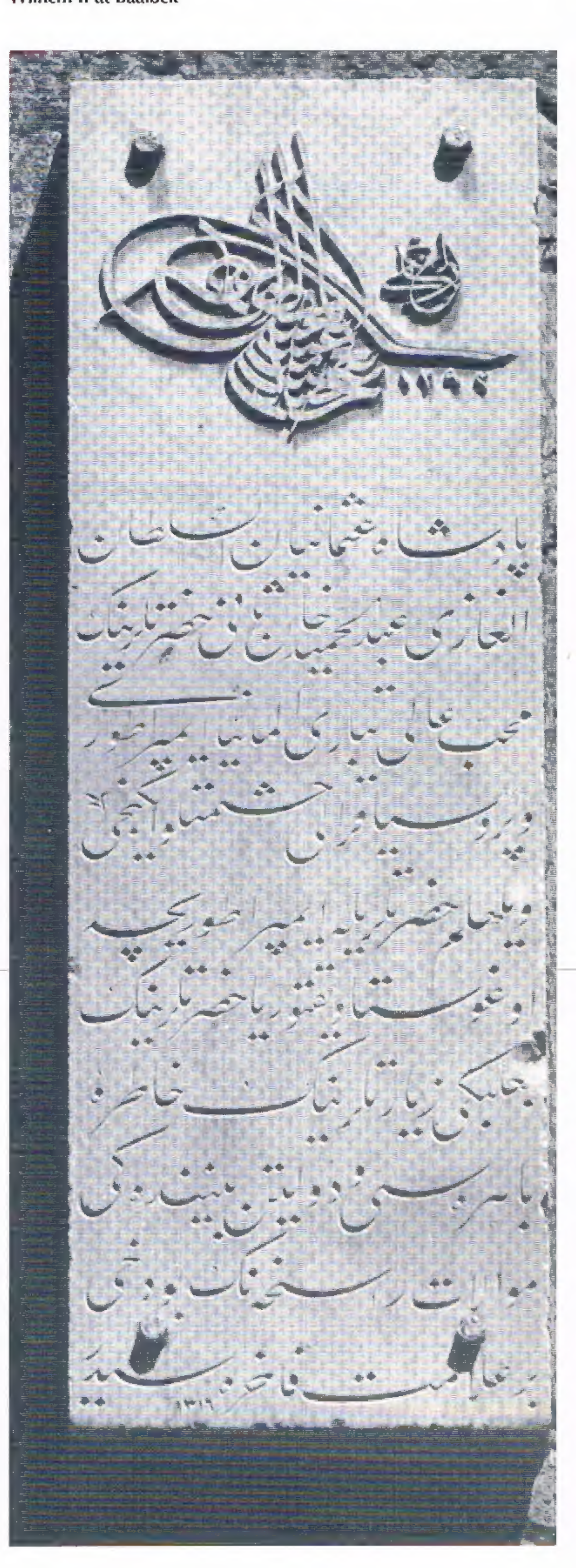
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HELIOPOLIS- BAALBEK RESEARCH IN RUINS 1898

Margarete Van Ess

1 Commemoration panel for the visit of the german emperor Wilhem II at Baalbek



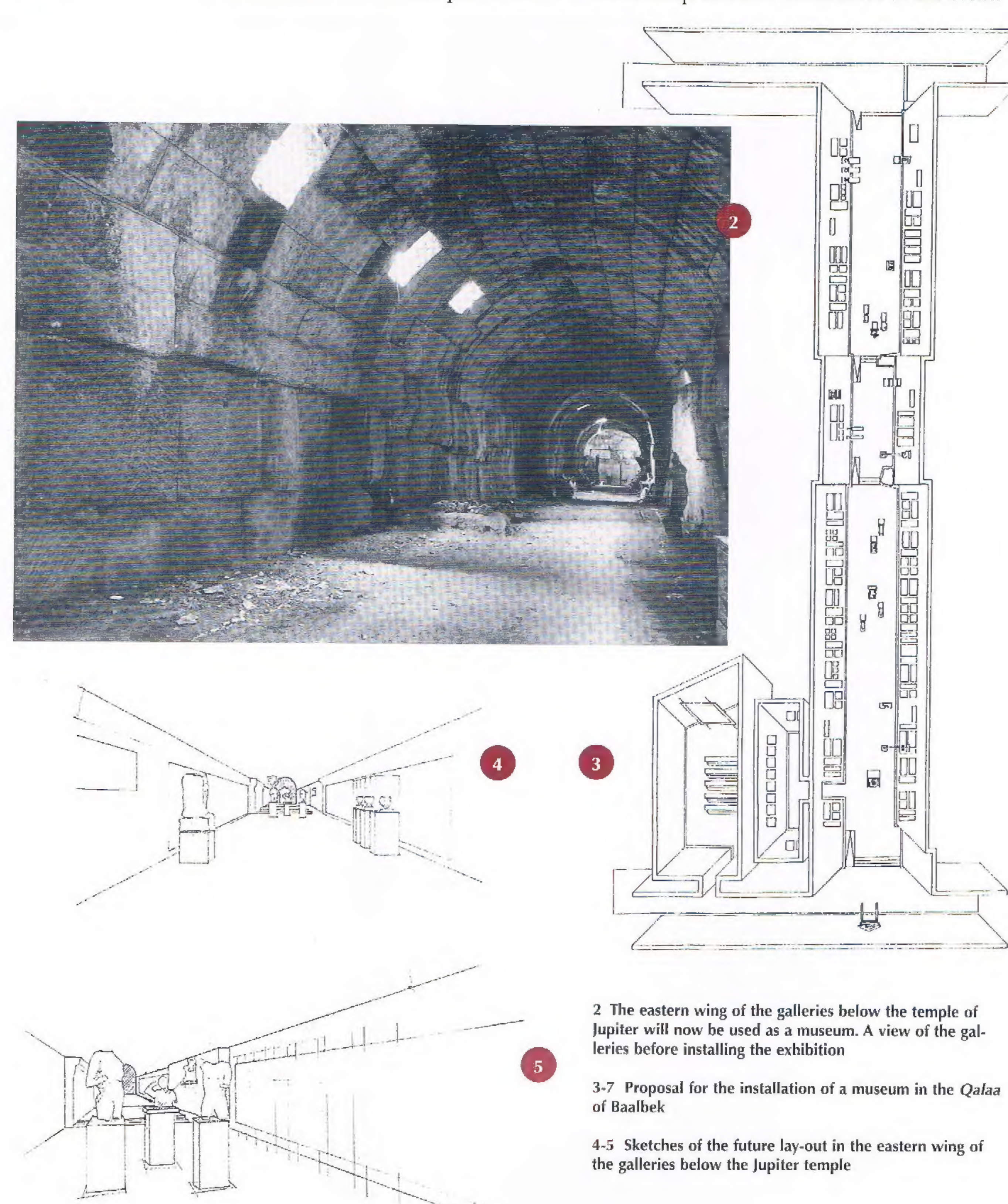
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Heliopolis- Baalbek
Research in Ruins 1898

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The German Institute of Archaeology in close cooperation with the '*Direction Générale des Antiquités du Liban*' has organised an exhibition in Baalbek. The official opening is scheduled for November 7, 1998. This project is supported by the State of Lebanon under President Hrawi, the German Foreign Ministry in Bonn, and the German Embassy in Beirut. A great number of Lebanese and German private individuals and companies have contributed to this event.

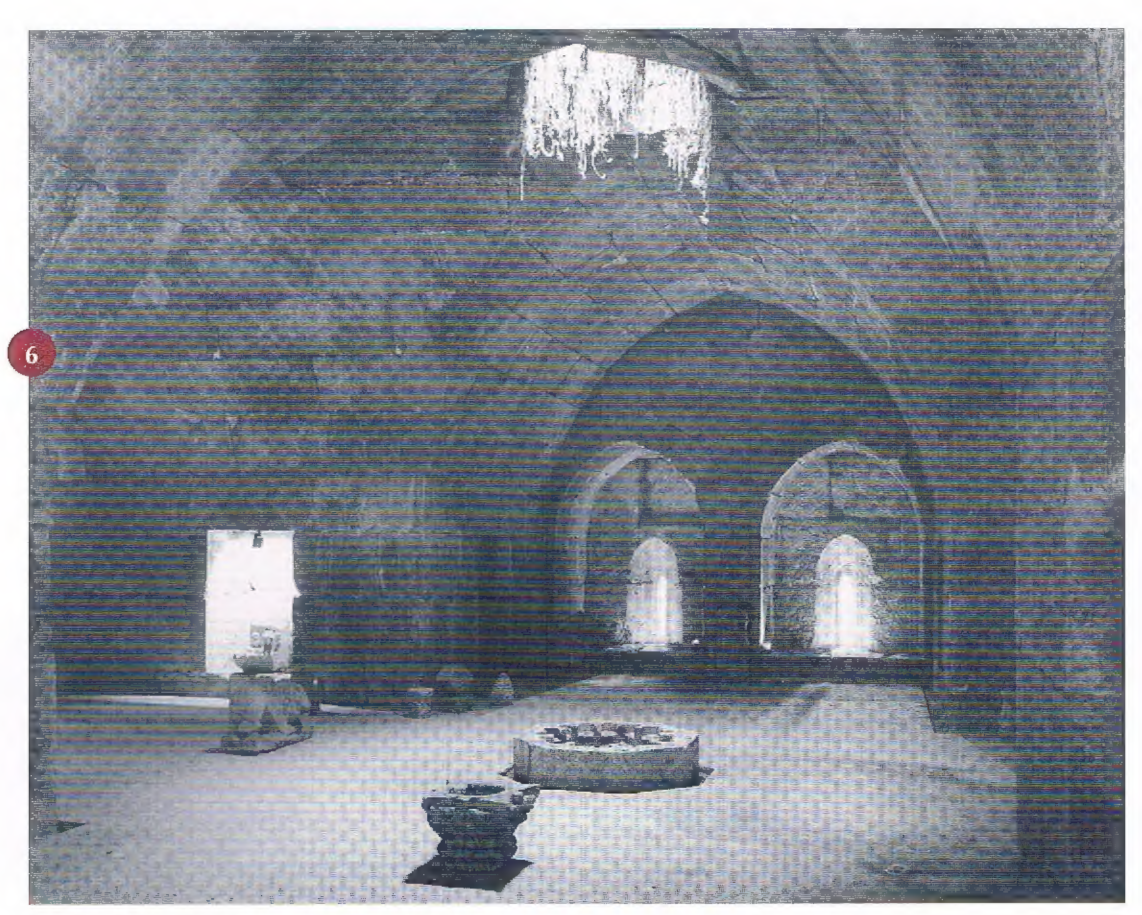


2 The eastern wing of the galleries below the temple of Jupiter will now be used as a museum. A view of the galleries before installing the exhibition

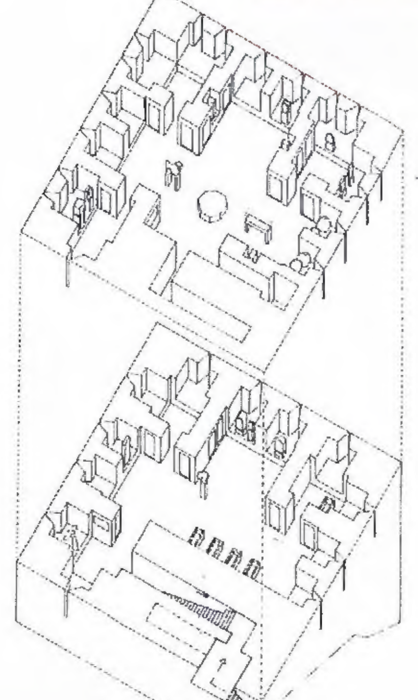
3-7 Proposal for the installation of a museum in the *Qalaa* of Baalbek

4-5 Sketches of the future lay-out in the eastern wing of the galleries below the Jupiter temple

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6 An inside view of the ayyoubid tower before the exhibition and its conversion to a museum

Heliopolis- Baalbek Research in Ruins 1898

Margarete Van Ess

Exactly 100 years ago the German Emperor Wilhelm II visited Baalbek. He was so deeply impressed by the magnificent monuments and their state of preservation that he immediately ordered excavation work on the site, most of which he financed. Between 1900 and 1904 German archaeologists excavated at Baalbek and during the 1920s results were published at an admirable standard. Under the French mandate excavations were resumed between 1930 and 1943, and they continued in 1945 under the direction of the Lebanese '*Service des Antiquités*'. But the most urgent duty was the consolidating and restoring of the ancient architecture, which initially had been undertaken by the French and later on by the Lebanese '*Service des Antiquités*'. Today Baalbek's large and noble Roman temples can be counted among the best preserved wonders of the ancient world. The UNESCO added Baalbek's monuments to the World Heritage List and for the people of Lebanon the monuments are a 'National Ruin'.

Due to more than two decades of Civil War in Lebanon the ancient ruins have been greatly neglected, and neither excavation nor restoration work has been carried out there. The Civil War had just come to an end when the Lebanese Antiquity Service decided to restore the ruins and organise an exhibition in an effort to provide the public with information about the history and archaeology of the buildings and make these more attractive to visitors.

Two areas of the ancient site have been prepared as a museum: the first area encompasses one of the long galleries underneath the great courtyard of the Temple of Jupiter and the second, the southern tower of the Ayyoubid Citadel.

The museum will serve several purposes:
To mark the visit of the German Emperor the main attraction will be the exhibition on the ground-floor of the monumental and imposing Temple of Jupiter, showing 40 statues, pieces of architecture and small findings as well as the scientific results of the excavations carried out during the past 100 years. A large number of magnificent old photographs, reconstruction drawings and excavation plans will explain these results. The second part of the museum constitutes the tower of the Ayyoubid fortification, which until now was restricted to the public. There will also be a premiere presentation of antiquities, mainly funerary objects, found in the vicinity of Baalbek. At the same time objects from the Islamic-Middle Age Period of Baalbek (Ayyoubid-Mamluk Time) will be displayed in great detail.

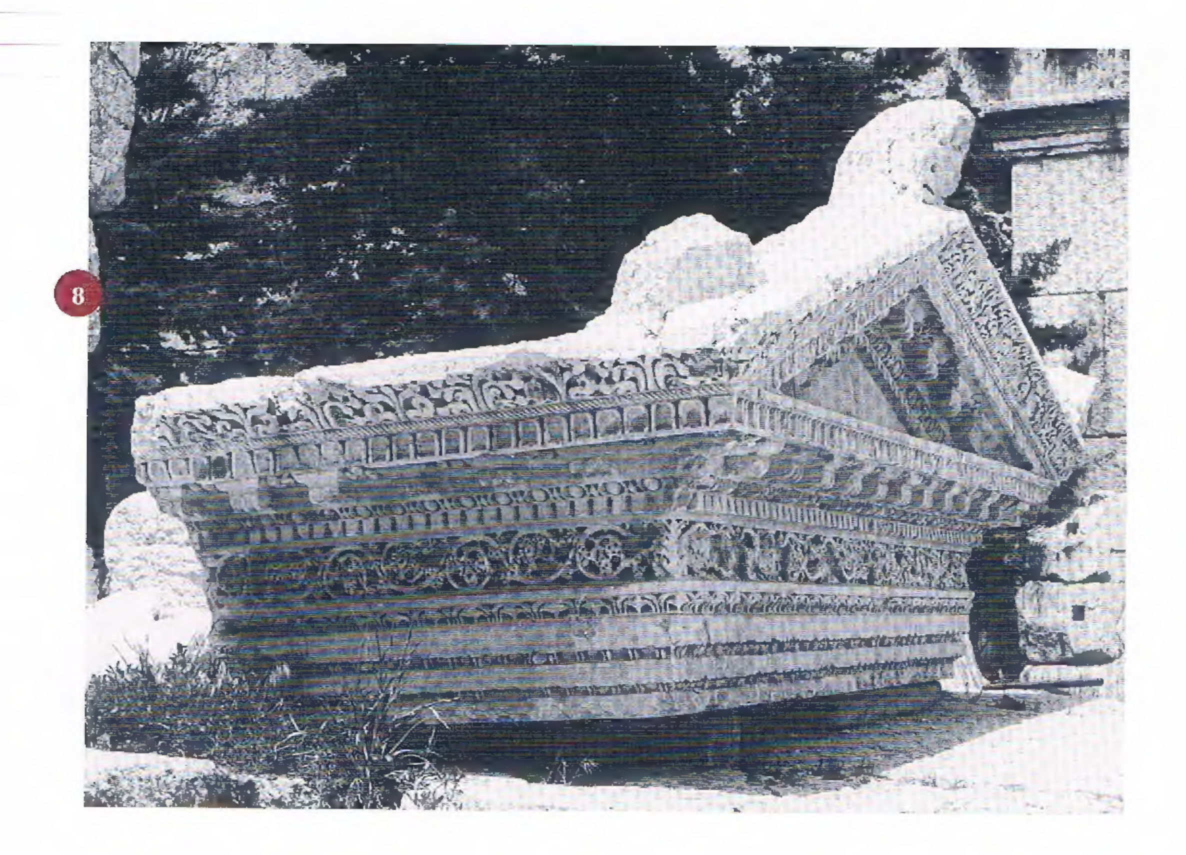
Only a few minor changes will be made in the itinerary guide for the visitors. Information boards will be set up in the ruins and a brochure containing information about the two exhibitions will be published. This brochure should serve as a guide through the monuments.
On the occasion of the Centennial of the Emperor's visit, the '*Orient Institut der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*' is publishing a book entitled "*Baalbek - the monument and its image*", which reviews the research work in and around Baalbek, shedding light on the historical and social aspects of the fascinating monuments which for centuries have always attracted visitors.

The opening of the museum should be only the beginning of a hopefully fruitful cooperation between the DGA and the German Institute of Archaeology. Already in 1997 they carried out a rescue excavation in the vicinity of Baalbek. Now, due to the steady growth of the city of Baalbek, the ancient Roman necropoli are increasingly endangered. Concerted effort is needed to excavate and to preserve them.
This and the scientific care of the famous ruins of Baalbek can only be solved through international cooperation. The German Institute of Archaeology is proud of supporting this project for the future.

8 Pediment of an edicula, possibly from the temple of Mercury, Baalbek

9 Young satyr to be exhibited in Baalbek

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